Technical Information

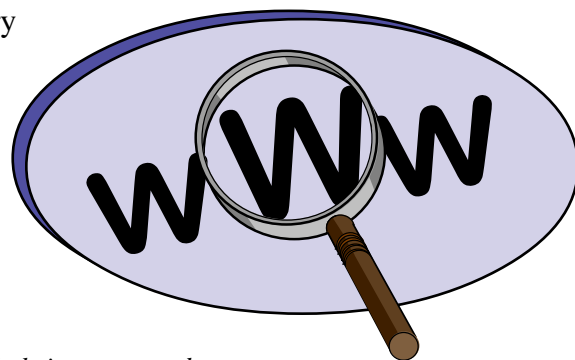## Search Sites Point the Way to Finding Information on the Web

Feeling adventurous? Or maybe you are looking for something specific? Whatever your mood, if you want to find anything on the World Wide Web, using a "search site" can help you find it as fast and as easily as typing a word.

Anyone the least bit familiar with the Web has heard of names like *Yahoo, Lycos*, and *Alta Vista*. These represent some of the largest and most popular search sites on the Web today. To locate the information you desire, each site sorts through millions of web pages located on Web servers all over the world. In a matter of seconds, the search site generates a list of Web pages or "hits" that meet your search criteria.

Today's search sites manage the Web's vast information using one of the following approaches: indexes, directories, or hybrids.

- **Web indexes** are large, computer-generated databases which can be queried by entering words, names, or phrases. Special Web search agents—often referred to as *robots*, *spiders*, *crawlers*, or *worms*—then root out Web pages that contain the keywords that you ask the search agent to find in its database. Popular search sites that use Web indexes include *Alta Vista*, *HotBot*, *Open Text*, and *World Wide Web Worm.* These search sites are particularly useful when you are looking for something specific, say "New York welfare reform."
- **Web directories** are hyperlinked▲ lists of Web sites, organized into topical categories and subcategories. Searches are conducted by pointing and clicking along a hierarchy of categories. Unlike Web indexes, directories are created by people, not computers. *Yahoo!* is the best known search site to incorporate a Web directory structure. Web directories are particularly useful if you just want to browse around for something fun or interesting, such as Web sites on travel, games, or TV.
- **Web hybrids** combine these approaches to offer both Web indexes and Web directories. Some of the most popular search sites in this category are *Excite*, *Infoseek*, *Lycos*, and *Webcrawler*.

The Neighborhood Networks Web site has made it easy for you to get started. Visitors will find a list of the 13 largest and most popular search sites on the Web within its "Other Resources" section. Get there by typing http://www.hud.gov/nnw/ nnwpop.html#Search

▲*Hyperlinks allow the user to simply click on a highlighted word or image with their mouse, and jump from one location to another on the Web, or to another location within the same Web page.*

Please read and forward to your local NN Centers. Thank you.